Governor of Delhi, Chief Minister of Delhi SC/ST Commission, Chief Commissioner, Income Tax and Sales Tax and Prime Minister;

(b) If so, what action Director General, ICCR has taken on the basis of these letters;

(c) if no action has been taken, the reasons thereof; and

(d) whether Government have investigated into the nexus between Balmer Lawrie & Co. and ICCR on the basis of media reports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE) : (a) Some MPs had written letters in 1997 to the Hon'ble Vice-President and Prime Minister alleging corruption in the ICCR during the period 1993—95.

(b) to (d) All these allegations of corruption including the alleged nexus between Balmer Lawrie & Co. and ICCR were investigated. These investigations were conducted by a high-powered Committee of two Vice-Presidents of the Governing Body of the ICCR, viz. an eminent intellectual and a senior MP. The allegations were also investigated by the Central Vigilance Commission. None of the allegations were found to have any substance and the Central Vigilance Commission advised closure of the cases. Further, the accounts of the Council for the period 1993—95 had been audited by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India and no instance of corruption was brought out in the audit reports. Following these allegations of corruption by some Hon'ble MPs in 1997, and press reports containing similar allegations, a fresh audit was conducted in 1997-98 for the period in question. Again no instance of corruption was brought to the notice of the Council by the Audit Party.

Enquiry into ICCR affairs

4035. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware of news-items captioned "culture of corruption". 'Scandalous splurge by ICCR' "MPs demand probe into ICCR Affairs" and "Indian Council for Cultural Regret" which appeared in the Pioneer on the 15th, 16th, 17th and 26th July, 1997;

(b) whether any CBI or Vigilance enquiry has been ordered on the basis of these media reports;

(c) if so, what is the outcome of the enquiry and what action Government have taken against those corrupt official; and

(d) if not, what prevented Government from doing so?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) All the allegations of corruption contained in these news items were investigated. These investigations were conducted by a high-powered committee of two Vice-Presidents of the Governing Body of the ICCR, viz. an eminent intellectual and a senior MP. The allegations were also investigated by the Central Vigilance Commission. None of the allegations were found to have any substance and the Central Vigilance Commission advised closure of the cases. Further, the accounts of the Council for the period 1993—95 had been audited by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India and no instance of corruption was brought out in the audit reports. Following these allegations of corruption which had appeared in sections of the Press, a fresh audit was conducted in 1997-98 for the period in question. Again no instance of corruption was brought to the notice of the Council by the Audit Party.

(d) Does not arise.

Economic ties with Maldives

4036. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to establish better economic ties with Maldives;

(b) whether the President of Maldives who visited India recently has discussed the need to establish better economic cooperation between both the countries; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) to (c) Government pay close attention to the development of cordial and cooperative links

with the Maldives, a friendly neighbouring country. Government have assisted the Government of Maldives under its bilateral technical assistance programme. Such cooperation has included the construction of a general hospital as well as of a technical institute in the Maldives. Government also assists the Maldives in its efforts at human resource development in a variety of fields including health, education and technical training. During the visit of the President of Maldives to India from June 30-July 1, 1998, the growth of bilateral economic cooperation was among the subjects reviewed.

Wasteful expenditure in Indian Missions

4037. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that wasteful expenditure in various Indian diplomatic missions abroad are increasing day by day;

(b) if so, whether Government have chalked out any plan to check wasteful expenditure in such Indian missions; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) to (c) Utmost attention is given to avoiding any excessive or wasteful expenditure in Indian diplomatic Missions abroad. Detailed and specific instructions have been issued to our Embassies abroad to identify areas where strick control could effectively curtail expenditure without compromising efficiency in the working of the Mission/Posts. The Proposals and expenditure figures received from Missions are carefully examined and in critical areas where there remains a tendency for the expenditure to increase have been identified and the expenditure figures in respect thereto are regularly monitored and corrective measures taken from time to time. The expenditure is subjected to post-audit by the Office of the Chief Controller of Account and is also subject to statutory audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

These measures have been generally successful in achieving the objectives and effective in controlling the expenditure. This is, however, an ongoing exercise.

प्रधान मंत्री की अमरीकी राष्ट्रपति और पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री के साथ बातचीत

4038. श्री अनन्तराय देवशंकर दवे: क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) प्रधान मंत्री द्वारा हाल ही में अमरीकी राष्ट्रपति और पाकिस्तान के प्रधान मंत्री के साथ सरकारी तौर पर हुई बातचीत के विशेष परिणाम क्या रहे;

(ख) उक्त बातचीत के दौरान कौन-कौन से द्विपक्षीय मुद्दों पर बातचीत की गई थी और क्या उन्होंने कश्मीर पर भारत के रुख के बारे में दोनों राष्ट्राध्यक्षों को अवगत कराया है;

(ग) कश्मीर पर इन राष्ट्राध्यक्षों की क्या प्रतिक्रिया रही है; और

(घ) किन-किन क्षेत्रों में द्विपक्षीय समझौतों पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए है?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्रीमती वसुन्धरा राजे): (क) प्रधान मंत्री ने हाल ही में अमरीका के राष्ट्रपति अथवा पाकिस्तान के प्रधान मंत्री से कोई सरकारी बातचीत नहीं की है।

(ख) से (घ) प्रश्न नहीं उठते।

Issue of Multi-Purpose Cards to Indians Abroad

4039. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether identity and multi-purpose cards are proposed to be issued to Indians abroad; if so, the benefits that would accrue to the holders of the card; and

(b) the conditions of eligibility for issue of such cards?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will the placed on the Table of the House.

Detainees at Myanmar Jail

4040. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether (i) S. Gandhi Singh, (ii) T.H. Mani Singh, (iii) K.H. Mani Singh, (iv) Yang Khoyan Baite, detainees at the Myanmar jail arrested on 24.4.1995 by the Myanmar police at the border gate No. 2, namphalong are still alive;